CHATS BY THE FIRESIDE

Thomas O'Hagan

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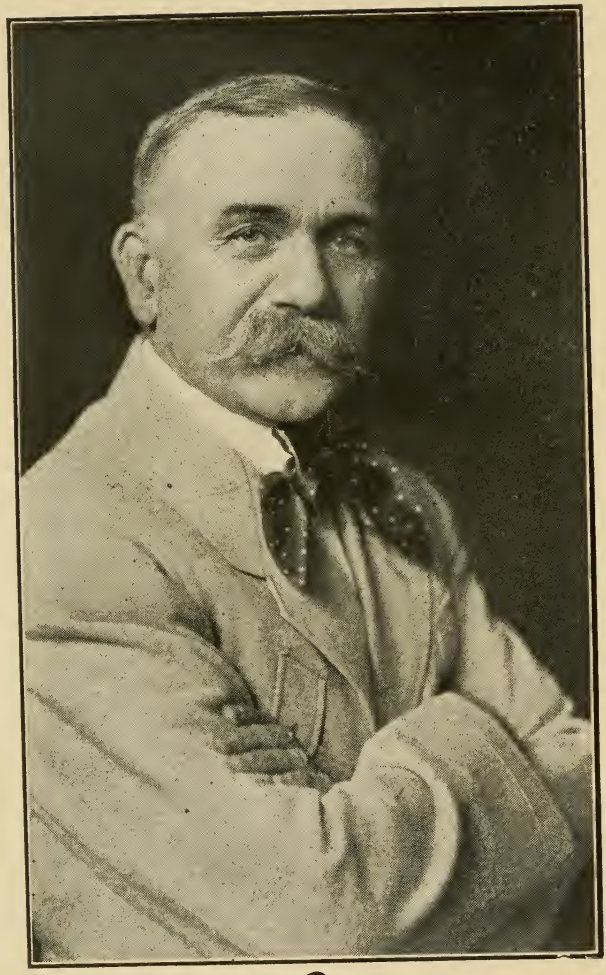

Thomas O'Hagan

CHATS BY THE FIRESIDE

A STUDY IN LIFE, ART AND LITERATURE

BY

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DEDICATION

To the Rev. Albert Reinhart, O. P., late editor of the Rosary Magazine and translator of Father Denifle's "Luther and Lutheranism" — wise Counsellor, sympathetic Critic and true Friend, I affectionately inscribe this volume.

THE AUTHOR.

FOREWORD

The "Chats" contained in this little volume have appeared during the past two years in the columns of the New World, of Chicago, and the Catholic Register, of Toronto, Ontario. They have been written in the few leisure moments that come to a busy editor whose journalistic duties shut out the heaven of dreams. The author would fain hope that these informal "Chats" may prove helpful and suggestive to teachers and students who manifest an interest in "Life, Art and Literature."

THOMAS O'HAGAN.

"The New World," Chicago, May 3d, 1911.

EDUCATION

CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL DEFICIENCIES

LET me here chat with my readers as to certain defects that mark the educational systems of America. I say systems, for has not each province in Canada, and each State in the Union, an educational system peculiar to itself? There is one defect which marks the educational work in well-nigh every part of America, and that is lack of thoroughness, and this is largely due to the haste with which studies are taken up, pursued and completed.

* * *

The desire to graduate and mingle in the affairs of life is so keen amongst us here in America that we are unwilling to undergo patient preparation for the duties that fall to our hands in the various walks of life. We would fain assume the responsibility of life and share in its financial rewards long before we have served our intellectual apprenticeship, and so we often see our young men and women face the world and gird on their swords for its battles while they are yet raw recruits intellectually. Indeed, it is amazing what superficiality marks much of the so-called scholarship of our day.

Nor is it in the primary schools that this deficiency is most marked. It is found in the classic halls of our great universities. Men have gabbled their way through the B. A., and even the Ph. D. courses, and have come out with undeveloped minds, little culture and no power. They have simply been stuffed and spoon-fed and have done no thinking for themselves. They have a smattering of a great many things and nothing thorough.

* * *

I myself have heard professors lecture to graduate students in universities who lacked both true and sound scholarship, as well as the more important thing still—inspiration. Again the specialism of the last twenty years has played havoc with broad scholarship. Men have been studying the Roman Empire and Mediæval France till they have forgotten how to spell or frame correctly in speech a logical sentence. Listen to these men lecture and what incorrect and slipshod English they use. They are so bent in pursuit of the historical fact that they pay no heed to the correct expression of thought, as if that, too, did not belong to scholarship.

* * *

No wonder that in such institutions of learning as Wellesley College the faculty have demanded of the girls that, in future, in order to graduate, they must be able to spell. The truth

is that in this country we are too fond of display. All our goods are in the window and very little in the shop. We should aim more at true and solid scholarship and less at display.

* * *

Why, for instance, should a young man be permitted to enter the medical profession until he has first received a liberal education? This country has passed out of the formative condition and should now gird up its loins and be satisfied with only the highest ideals and supreme excellence in everything. Granted that we are still walled in by the material, should not our ideals overcome this and set before our lives such a high standard that neither mediocrity nor presumption can enter our scholastic gates? * * *

The generosity of our people has builded libraries at our door, but how few are the serious students amongst us. We skim the morning and evening papers and, perhaps, read one of the "six best sellers," but we never think of dipping into the tomes of wisdom that the genius of man has bequeathed us. So we live day by day on the chaff and chips of ephemeral scribbling. * * *

How delightful, indeed, it is to meet with a lover of good books and the wisdom packed between their covers! Such a one grows intellectually, ripens in the things of the mind and

becomes truly cultured. As Carlyle said, a library is a true university, but how few get the best out of that university! If they did we would forget to enquire what had been their courses in the schools. We have all poetry, we have all art, we have all history, which is a record of the activities of man; we have the wisdom of the world's greatest thinkers, and yet we profit little by these princes of genius—in our blindness eating the husks strewn by the wayside, forgetful ever of the rich banquet so carefully prepared for us.

CATHOLIC AND SECULAR COLLEGES CONTRASTED

NOW that our colleges have begun work and our students are enrolled, it is well for us to take an inventory of the educational conditions of our day, for education in itself is one of the chief factors not only in the fashioning of our lives but in the promotion of our temporal and spiritual happiness.

Indeed, we little dream how great a share education has in shaping the character of our civilization and creating for it ideals, towards which and in the attainment of which humanity strives and reaches and crowns its labors with achievement and success.

* * *

Catholic education and secular education are broadly differentiated in the fact that the former emphasizes the things of the soul, while the latter emphasizes the things of the mind. In every land where the Catholic Church builds a school or a college, its first thought is the spiritual welfare of the student. In this it does not in the least minimize the importance of the intellect, but it rightfully places above all knowledge the knowledge of God.

So if you were to ask me what is the most striking difference in the character of the instruction given to-day in the Catholic and non-Catholic College, I should say that in the Catholic College the student is taught to discriminate between truth and falsehood—he is not left at the mercy of error, with its alluring false lights, as is the student in the non-Catholic College, who can believe everything and anything and whose professor or instructor, wandering himself in the desert of thought, dare not tell his class "This is false and that is true."

* * *

In no department, therefore, is the non-Catholic College so weak as in the department of philosophy. Philosophy in its final analysis is correct thinking, but in non-Catholic Colleges, since there is no recognition of absolute truth, the best that is done in the courses in philosophy is simply a study of the various Systems or Schools of philosophy. It is evident, then, that a course in such colleges is of but little value to the young mind seeking for laws and principles of correct thinking, which later on may safely guide his footsteps through the mazes and perplexities of life's problems.

* * *

When we turn to the department of letters or, if you will, humanities, we have much to be

thankful for also in our Catholic Colleges. Now all literature is but a reflection of life and indeed there is nothing in all art but what is in life. For what is art but life idealized, and the basis of all idealization is truth.

* * *

Since, then, literature is but a reflection of life we may naturally expect it to mirror also the errors and falsehoods of life. For instance, the poet builds a great poem, but based on false philosophy, as in the case, for instance, of Pope's "Essay on Man," or Tennyson's "In Memoriam," which simply reflect the philosophy of Bolingbroke and the mingling of doubt and faith and pantheism of the philosophers of the first half of the nineteenth century, under whose influence the poet Tennyson fell.

* * *

All this, woven in the splendid and memory-clinging couplets of Pope or the divine music of Tennyson, is accepted by the non-Catholic professor and student without any protest—indeed little heed is paid to the truth or falsehood of the teaching, the mind of professor and class being surrendered to the vital beauty and power of the poem. Of course it should be here stated that much of the informing thought of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" may, without reserve, be also accepted by any Catholic.

I hold here that what is strongest, best, most enduring and absolutely essential in all great English poetry is Catholic, as indeed any life—spiritual life—there is to-day in non-Catholic Churches has its warmth because of its borrowed spiritual fire from the Catholic Altar. I need not here appeal to Catholic truths modified or believed in part by various Churches.

* * *

We Catholics have the full warmth of God's great spiritual Sun, while theirs are the borrowed or lesser rays that light up but little corners. Hence it is that all art is ours—sculpture, architecture, painting, music. The saints, too, are ours, with whom we can commune. The Mother of God is of our household and we have ever a throne for her divine Son in our hearts and homes.

SOME EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

A TALK about some universities of Europe may be of interest to my readers. They have grown through the centuries, and many of the oldest and most renowned owe their foundations to the munificence and patronage of the Popes of the Middle Ages, for the Catholic Church at all times has been an enlightened promoter of the arts and sciences and has freely and generously encouraged the advancement of learning among the people.

* * *

The three most ancient universities in Europe are unquestionably Paris, Oxford and Bologna, and it is difficult to say just when they received their charters and recognition as veritable universities. The French allege with much pride that it was a colony of scholars from Paris University that established Oxford University. Indeed, these two great mediæval universities began their work almost contemporaneously, and their influence upon mediæval life and culture cannot be overestimated.

* * *

I have said that Paris, Oxford and Bologna were the first European universities, yet this is

not entirely correct, since the Arabs had two universities—one in Southern Italy, and the other in Spain—which antedate in foundation these three universities. Paris University was long famed for its courses in philosophy and theology, and Bologna for its courses in Roman law. In this respect Bologna was an important factor in bringing about the Italian Renaissance, in the impetus which it gave to the study of the Latin tongue. I say Latin tongue because in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Latin was really a living language, and in Italy held much the same place at the courts that French held at the court in England.

* * *

In estimating the number of students in attendance at the mediæval universities, it is well to remember that there was no such stringent matriculation in vogue as there is to-day. Indeed, we know for a certainty that boys of twelve years of age swelled the student body at Oxford in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when it is estimated that as many as twelve and fifteen thousand students attended lectures in this ancient seat of English learning.

* * *

A university of early foundation and, next to Paris, the oldest in France, is Montpelier, in Provence. This university has been noted for centuries for its medical school. A goodly num-

ber of men eminent in science and letters in France have been educated at this ancient seat of learning. It is, however, best known to-day for its courses in medicine.

* * *

There are in all sixteen universities in France, and of course Paris is the crown of all these, since nearly everything that is great in literature and art is centralized in the gay and beauteous French capital. I was going to say that the other fifteen universities don't count—at least not with great scholars. This, I think, is a pity. No one university in any country should possess a monopoly of education—it should, rather, be freely distributed.

* * *

In Germany, for instance, Berlin University has no such monopoly. Heidelberg and Bonn and Munich have professors quite as eminent as those of Berlin, while Paris decoys away and holds all, or nearly all, the professors of national reputation in France. Of course, for the study of such a special subject as Celtic, the University of Rennes, in the heart of Brittany, and the University of Poitiers stand preeminent.

* * *

Among the universities of Europe to-day distinctly Catholic, Louvain, in Belgium, stands, I think, easily at their head. Indeed, Louvain is the strongest and best organized university—

Catholic or non-Catholic—that I have found in Europe. There is a thoroughness and solidity in it that I could not find anywhere else. It is a credit to Catholic scholarship, and deserves the support of the whole Catholic world.

* * *

Another Catholic university doing splendid work, though its student body is not very large, is Fribourg, in Switzerland. It has a number of very distinguished professors, and there is a serious and solid character to all its work. It is here that the brilliant Dominican Father Mandonnet lectures on Church history.

* * *

But I must not forget to mention Innsbruck University, in the Tyrol, whose philosophical and theological departments are in the hands of that able body of educators, the Jesuits. Here it was that Dr. Pastor, the historian of the Popes, lectured for many years. While the medical school of the Innsbruck University is not as far-famed as that of Vienna, it has on its staff several professors eminent in their special departments. Mention should be also made here of the Catholic University of Lille, which has always stood high, especially in the department of French literature.

VOYAGING TO EUROPE AND TIPPING

VOYAGING TO EUROPE

LET me chat with my readers about voyaging to Europe. For many years it had been my ambition to cross the ocean—to tempt the tempests of the deep. I must confess that I found it a very pleasant experience. Of course your pleasure will depend a good deal on the character of the ship's passengers. If they are social, genial, wellbred people you are likely in for a good time, but they may happen to be a dull, uncouth—I was going to say uncivilized crowd.

* * *

I have had one experience a little strange in my different trips to Europe—the going there has always been pleasant, while usually the returning has been disagreeable. Not only have I always been caught in an ocean storm while returning, but the social side of the return trip has always disappointed me. Perhaps this is owing to the fact that every mind is in optimistic tension when voyaging to Europe because of the expected pleasures ahead, while on the return trip a surfeit of sightseeing has cloyed the mind and rendered it not open to social pleasures.

One of the first things to occupy the mind in setting sail is the taking of an inventory or, if you will, making a catalogue of the passengers. Every one is anxious to know who is who. An hour or so and usually the cataloguing is done. A passenger boat going to Europe is quite a little world in itself — for usually nearly all classes of people are represented in it.

* * *

You have the Englishman who, perhaps, has been seeking his fortune in the Canadian Klondike, returning with a good deal more wisdom and experience than gold. He stands monocled, gazing at the passengers as they go up the gangway. Yet there is about him a fine freedom, which he gained under the aurora borealis of the great Northland and which he never would possess had he remained in England, for your typical Englishman is cold and insular.

* * *

And just over there a step from us is a mother and two daughters—the daughters have finished their course at college and are seeking the culture that comes from travel. They expect to visit all the art centers of Europe and get on good terms with Raphael and Turner and Murillo and Titian. Then the younger of the two girls will remain in Paris to pursue her studies in painting, for which she has a particular talent and taste.

Here at our elbow is an Exile of Erin—not exactly such a one as Thomas Campbell, the Scotch poet, met at Antwerp when he penned those touching lines so creditable to his sympathy and genius—but rather an exile of Erin who has prospered in the land of the Maple and who now, absent from his fatherland for forty years, is returning to the cradle of his fathers beside the Shannon, with all its historic memories. * * *

Then, of course, we have on board a type of the young lady who is going abroad bent on conquest. She has already catalogued all the "nice" young men on board and she very soon starts shooting her arrows. Usually her first catch, as she carelessly and recklessly throws her bait, is a university graduate, wearing a soft sophomore look and a pair of well-adjusted eye-glasses. Their accidental acquaintance is a kind of an overture to the whole varied performance that is to follow. Eight days of intermittent friendship on the ocean and then even the mysterious deep knows all the secrets of the twain.

ON TIPPING

JUST a word with my readers on the subject of "tipping" which obtains so largely in every country of Europe. The French call it "Pourboire" and the Germans "Trinkgeld." Every tourist from America who visits Europe very soon learns what it means, however foreign may be the word to him. It has become a very nuisance in well nigh every country of the Old World and we are not without its annoyance in America, though it is not so much in evidence here.

* * *

I know nothing, I must confess, of its origin, but like all venerable customs I suppose it can be traced back to the time of the Caesars, and perhaps this is the original meaning of "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." It is not too much to say that "tipping" supports a whole army in Europe. It is a kind of a respectable way of begging—a degree higher than street corner mendicancy, but to the tourist a degree more annoying.

* * *

Of course "tipping" obtains in Great Britain and Ireland, but it has reached the subtlety of

a science in Italy and France. However, in such countries as Ireland and Italy it is surrounded with such tact and good nature on the part of the petitioner that you feel it almost a pleasure to give. There is a very charm in the manner in which an Irish guide can coax money out of you. He never lets you know what he is after—chloroforming your senses with the graciousness of his tongue and the sweet palaver of his compliments, till the first thing you know you have well nigh emptied your pockets into his.

* * *

The Italian does his work by a kind of strategy and, though you may have a suspicion that he is following the trail, you hate to draw him away from the scent of his game. Then of course he is a descendant of Marcus Tullius Cicero and Brutus and Romulus and Eneas, and you'd feel ashamed to ignore such ancestors in the Italian guide of to-day, who is ever ready to point out to you all the remains of Roman glory.

* * *

The "tipping" in Austria is very general—I think more so than in any other country of Europe. No matter how small may be the outlay, you are supposed to add something as a

"tip." That is the reason that every "Kellnerin," or waitress, in the dual Empire is able, after a few years' service, to set up business for herself. After six or seven years as waitress she has stored up through "tips" quite a little fortune and, having found a worthy mate for life, she is able, as we say, to begin business "on her own hook."

* * *

I shall never forget an experience I once had in the historic city of St. Malo in Brittany. Traveling in my care was a young man who had as yet had no experience with European ways. Arriving at St. Malo early in the morning, by boat from Southampton in England, we took up our quarters in the leading hotel of the city—one which catered a great deal to English tourists. The good lady—for Madame is supreme in a French hotel — thought we would remain as her guests for at least a week, and consequently gave us reduced rates. But in two days we saw the city of Jacques Cartier and Chateaubriand from end to end and forthwith proceeded to pay our bills and press on through Brittany. Madame was in consequence disappointed, and as she presented the bill she simultaneously touched a button, and, presto! five waiters, a handy man and three chambermaids stood around us as a bodyguard, lest we should suffer violence at the hands of the house-

hold. My young friend sought refuge behind a door—I suppose that he might witness how I would behave under such heavy fire. But I had been in a few engagements before and, having tipped one waiter and one chambermaid, we sought refuge in the bus that was to convey us to the station. * * *

I have a tingling memory of a Venetian guide who once proffered me his services, to guide me through the labyrinthian streets of that city till I reached St. Marks. The streets are so full of intricate windings that I think we must have walked well nigh five miles before we reached our objective point. Ever afterwards I took a gondola. Venice is not for pedestrians. My guide certainly earned his few scudis. He perhaps needed it for his dinner of black bread and wine. He, too, perhaps was a descendant of some of the legionary soldiers that had marched with Caesar into Gaul. If so, it was something to have a guide with such ancestors.

HENRY WADSWORTH
LONGFELLOW

THE POET LONGFELLOW

LET my theme to-day be our sweet poet of the home and fireside—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Not that I desire to appraise him, for this belongs to the reader. Just simply to recall some of his more popular poems and speak of the circumstances that attended their birth and genesis. * * *

Longfellow has told us himself how he came to write many of his poems. It is strange how the fire of inspiration touches the lips and hearts of some poets. A fact worth noting in this connection is that the subject of a poem may, so to speak, haunt the dreams and thoughts of a poet for weeks and months before it has been set down on paper. No doubt this is true of all art, and it would be interesting indeed to know how long the shadowing and uplifting wings of inspiration hovered over a Dante, a Goethe, a Wagner and a Michael Angelo ere they produced a Divine Comedy, a Faust, a Parsifal and a Last Judgment.

* * *

But perhaps it is well that great artists do not betray or reveal to the world their sweet communion, their sweet converse, with the

guests of inspiration, with the guests of the soul. As I have already said, Longfellow, however, has taken us into his confidence and told us the genesis of many of his beautiful poetic productions. He wrote the "Psalm of Life" when quite a young man. It was, he tells us, a bright day and the trees were blooming and he felt an impulse to write out his aim and purpose in life. He put the poem into his pocket and sometime later, being solicited by a popular magazine for a poem, he sent the "Psalm of Life." * * *

That sweet lyric, "The Bridge," was written by Longfellow in great sorrow. He had lost, I think, his first wife—for the poet was twice married and it will be remembered that "Hyperion," according to a pleasing legend, was written to win the heart of her who became his second wife—and Longfellow used to go over the bridge to Boston of evenings, to meet friends, and return near midnight by the same way. The way was silent save here and there a belated footstep. The sea rose or fell among the wooden piers and there was a great furnace on the Brighton hills, whose red light was reflected by the waves. It was on such a late solitary walk that the spirit of the poem came upon him. * * *

Longfellow has also told us how the "Tales of a Wayside Inn" came to assume their form.

He had published a part of the metrical story in magazines. He desired to include them with others in a continuous narrative, and he bethought himself of the old Wayside Inn in Sudbury, where his father-in-law used sometimes to give hospitable dinners, but which he himself had only once seen. He placed his story-tellers there. The student was Mr. Wales; the poet Mr. Parsons, the Dante scholar; the Sicilian Luigi Monte; the Jew Edrehi. There were many places described by the poet that he had only seen in his mind's eye. Such were the scenes of Grand Pré in "Evangeline" and the Falls of Minnehaha. "I never wished to see Acadia" he once said after the reputation of "Evangeline" had become established. "I would feel that the sight would not fulfill my vision." Longfellow, however, it is said, once visited the Wayside Inn, after he had made it famous by his poem.

* * *

In the composition of Hiawatha, that beautiful Indian epic which has done so much to immortalize the aborigine in American literature, Longfellow drew from two great sources — Schoolcraft's history of the American Indian and Father Marquette's diary. From the latter Longfellow took whole lines and incorporated them in his popular poem.

As to the mold of the verse in Hiawatha, why, the poet, who had a most accurate and intimate knowledge of nearly all the European languages and literature, found and followed for model the great Finnish tale of Kalevala. So closely is Hiawatha fashioned on the great Finnish epic that some regard Longfellow's poem as a plagiarism. The charge, however, is without foundation. As well charge modern English poets, because they have chosen the Spenserian stanza, with plagiarizing Spenser.

* * *

Longfellow himself tells us how he came to write "Excelsior": "I wrote 'Excelsior'," he says, "after receiving a letter from Charles Sumner at Washington full of lofty sentiments. In one of the sentences occurred the word 'excelsior.' As I dropped the letter that word again caught my eye. I turned over the letter and wrote my poem. I wrote the 'Wreck of the Hesperus' because, after hearing an account of the loss of a part of the Gloucester fishing fleet in an autumn storm, I met the words 'Norman's woe.' I retired for the night after reading the report of the disaster, but the scene haunted me. I arose to write and the poem came to me in whole stanzas." * * *

Of course it is well known how Longfellow came to write "The Old Clock on the Stairs." It was suggested to him by the simile used

in a sermon by a French priest who likened eternity to the pendulum of a clock, which went on forever, saying: "Toujours-jamais! Jamais-toujours!" "Forever-never! Never-forever!" And when a visitor was once being shown through Longfellow's home, the poet said, "The clock in the corner of the room is not the one to which I refer in my 'Old Clock on the Stairs.' That clock stood in the country house of my father-in-law at Pittsfield, among the Berkshire hills."

* * *

Longfellow is one of the sweetest poets in the English language. It is true that he lacks sublimity and strength, but he possesses a grace, tenderness and humanity that have opened the door of every heart to him, it matters not in what clime.

* * *

When studying in Europe a few years ago I was astonished at the knowledge and appreciation which Germans, Belgians, French and Italians have of him. He is translated into nearly all European languages and, as I write, I have before me an excellent German translation of many of his sweetest and best known lyrics—the work of a German professor at Dresden.

LANGUAGES, MAGAZINES AND CRITICISM

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OUR good old mother tongue—the heritage of centuries — shall here be my theme. Of all languages it is the most composite and, while neither the most logical nor clear, it is marked by a richness of expression, a wealth of vocabulary and a flexibility unsurpassed by any other language of modern times. It has not the precision or artistry of the French, the word-building genius of the German, the spiritual suggestiveness of the Celtic or the subtle nuances of the Spanish or Italian.

* * *

Yet this noble tongue that Shakespeare and Milton once "spake" has, we might say, a very gift of tongues. It is English but it is more than that. It embodies something of the soul of all speech known to civilized nations. By the infusion of the majestic language of Virgil during various epochs and centuries of its life, it shares in the stateliness of Latin genius, while its Saxon veins throb with the warmth and directness of the plain but expressive turn or thought of the days of Alfred the Great. Nor has it lost entirely the courtly polish of its

Norman ancestry or the noblesse oblige of the days, dark yet urbane, of the unfortunate Stuarts.

* * *

But, truth to say, like its people it has been a pirate and freebooter upon every sea and has not only robbed the precious word-argosies of other nations but in some cases has maintained that these gipsy children are its own. But, just because the English language is so composite and full of the accent of every strange land, it is thereby the more difficult to perfect— the more difficut to polish and prune and make truly like unto itself.

* * *

A linguistic phenomenon, strange but interesting, is the new molding, the new accent that has come into its life since it has found another home under New World stars. For assuredly the English of London and New York or Boston differs as widely as does the trend of thought there. This is, however, in every way in accordance with the law and growth of languages. Separate the sprig from its parent root and you have in time a tree bearing a family likeness, it is true, but quite individual in form, branch and outline.

* * *

It is humanity that works this change psychologically, aided by every accident of time

and place. By the way, we have an excellent illustration of this in the second book of Virgil's Aeneid, wherein is described the bloody combat between the Greeks and Trojans. Troy of course was a Greek colony, but so many years had intervened since its foundation that its people spoke a Greek differing much in accent from that of Sparta or Athens. And though, as it will be remembered, the Trojans at the suggestion of Coroebus played the ruse of changing shields and donning the arms of the Greeks, yet they were discovered because of the difference of their accent:

"Primi clipeos mentitaque tela
Agnoscunt, atque ora sono discordia signant."

* * *

It is true that Homer assumes that the Greeks and Trojans spoke the same language, which is no doubt correct, and the difference between them very likely was merely that of a dialect.

* * *

It has always seemed strange to me how localized the English accent has become here in America. See how clearly differentiated in accent is the speech of the man from Maine, the man from Indiana and the man from Virginia, and this despite the fact that there is and always has been more or less intercourse between all three States. But we think that

time, instead of emphasizing, will reduce this difference. Properly speaking, no dialect has ever had root in America. That is, if we understand by dialect the form or idiom of a language peculiar to a province or to a limited region or people, as distinguished from the literary language of the whole people. The nearest approach to a dialect in America is that which is represented in the Hoosier poems of James Whitcomb Riley, but we think that the diction of Riley's poems scarcely represents the every day language of the Indiana common people. No doubt in the main it is a transcript, but exaggerated just enough to create the veritable local atmosphere and setting.

* * *

We remember here Artemus Ward's humorous reference to the difference of speech in America, where he tells of a convict in Connecticut who, on entering the jail, told the jailer with something of pride in his voice that he could speak six different languages: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and the jailer replied gruffly, "Sir, we speak but one language here and very little of that."

* * *

Nowhere has an English dialect become so crystallized and fixed as in England. Take for instance Devonshire, Lancashire and York-

shire, and any one who has visited these three English counties knows full well how difficult it is to make out the speech of the common people.

* * *

As you go north in England you find the language of the peasantry, as in Northumberland, approximating very closely to that of the neighboring Scotch dialect across the Firth of Forth. Indeed the rich homely language of Burns will be found as the basis of nearly all the dialects of England, for this is in accordance again with the unchangeable law of languages that their essentials, but not their accidents, live ever on.

A WORD ABOUT LANGUAGES

THE English, the Americans and the Canadians are the worst linguists in the world. I know nothing about the Australians or the Cape Colony people, but I take it that, being British colonies, they follow in this respect the traditions of the mother country. The growth or extension of a language depends upon the growth or extension of the nation speaking that language.

* * *

For instance, there has been a greater growth and extension of English and German as languages during the past quarter of a century than there has been of French, because of the increasing and preponderating influence of the United States, England and Germany in the councils of nations and their development of colonies and commerce. Indeed both these languages are to-day studied almost solely for commercial purposes. I speak here of the practical study for the purpose of speaking and writing, not their academic, which is limited to

their theoretical study in our schools and colleges, and which frequently has but little value even as a mental discipline. But, while the French language has not had the extension of the other two languages, English and German, because the flag of France no longer stands for commerce or colony-planting, it has had an extension among scholars, savants and the elite of thought quite beyond what the political or commercial importance of the nation behind it would warrant. For, notwithstanding the marvelous increase in the number of people who speak English and German to-day, French still retains its hold as the universal language of scholars and diplomats, as well as of courts and kings. Nor, in my opinion, will it ever fall from this high estate.

* * *

You cannot kill or efface the culture of a people flowering through the centuries. France has been to mediæval and modern times what Greece was to the ancient world, nor are the dramas of Aristophanes, Euripides and Sophocles or the sculpture of Phidias or Praxiteles of deeper significance to the world of art than are the creations of French genius to the culture of our day. From the Greeks we get ideality and proportion, from the French the logical harmony of all beauty and thought.

Speaking of the fact that French still holds its throne in the halls of scholars, I saw this well exemplified at Carlsbad in Bohemia last summer. Gathered around a table in a restaurant were four tourists, with appetites whetted by the keen mountain air of that delightful resort. One of the quartette, a lady, came from Odessa, in Russia, and the three gentlemen were, respectively, a Custom House officer from Buda-Pesth in Hungary, an officer in the Roumanian army, and the writer. But two of the four knew German, and only one English. Now we all were in a talking mood, which is not uncommon when tourists by chance are thrown together. It was soon discovered that every one of the four knew French, and we were capable of conversing freely in the language of Lamartine and Victor Hugo.

* * *

I found that the Russian woman had the best command of French and her grip on the facts of life, art and government was wonderful. No doubt she had never gone to a Vassar or co-education university, yet she had a knowledge of the world, its peoples, politics and principles that would put to shame any "co-ed" nurtured under New World stars, with portrait appearing monthly in our daily papers. Remember that I am not setting up the Russian woman—that

is, the average Russian woman—as at all the equal of the American woman in intelligence. She is not. But the educated Russian woman is a deep thinker and has a far more richly stored mind as to the great facts of life, government, history and art than the brightest of our women, whose little educational skiffs but skim the great sea of knowledge, yet seldom linger to study the mysterious secrets of the deep.

* * *

Of course languages are not everything, but they are the key to a good deal. They at least broaden the mind and make us for the moment forget the cottage of our birth. Through languages we learn that there have been great thinkers and dreamers in this world of ours who did not speak the language that "Shakespeare and Milton once spake." Through languages, too, we get closer to the genius of every land—closer to the genius of every people. Their acquisition, therefore, will steady our judgments and give a new value to our opinions, for judgments and opinions based upon sentiment and not upon fact are well-nigh worthless.

* * *

Another proof that French is still to the scholar in every land, and particularly in Europe, of great importance, is the fact that nearly

every one of the sixteen universities of France has a summer session for foreign students. The first French university to establish this special course or semester for foreign students was, I believe, Grenoble, and it draws to-day to its lecture-halls during its summer session a very large number of students from well-nigh every country in Europe as well as America. Dijon and Nancy and Caen universities have followed suit, and it is not too much to say that during the months of July, August, September and October thousands of students from England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden, Russia, Italy, Bulgaria, Austria, and especially Germany, register and follow courses in French in the universities of France.

* * *

And yet men will speak of the decay of the French language. Not so. If you mean that the augmentation of French-speaking people is not equal to that of the English or German, yes; but if you mean the interest—the practical interest taken in French by scholars, students and thinkers, it is far from the truth to speak of the decay of the language of Racine and Molière.

* * *

Just a word as to the value of French as an expression of thought. It is evident to anybody who knows anything about languages that for

clear, logical, artistic expression the French stands alone. Now have we any proof of this? Its proof is found in the fact that such a beauteous body of prose writing is found nowhere as in France. He must be steeped in prejudice who cannot admit this—nay, voice it from the housetops.

* * *

Remember that I am not so enthusiastic about French poetry. I think it does not measure up to either English or German poetry. And in some departments — especially in the lyric—I think the German the greatest of all. The great songs of to-day are German, and the voicing in song of the national heart has never been surpassed as yet by any other land.

CONCERNING COMPOSITION

IN one of my recent "chats" I spoke of the composite character of the English language; to-day I wish to speak more definitely and concretely of English composition and the great need of word study, if we would hope to express ourselves clearly and elegantly in the language of Milton and Shakespeare.

* * *

Buffon, the great French scientist, tells us that "Le style c'est l'homme"—the style is the man. There can be no doubt about the truth of this statement. Style simply reflects or registers a man's mode or manner of thinking. We speak of a diffuse style, a concise style, a nervous style, a clear style, a periodic style, all of which styles are governed by the mode of the thought which orders the sentence. All composition, therefore, reduced to its final analysis, and all the rules of composition are nothing more than thought development.

* * *

Now a study of rhetoric in its relation to composition is indeed interesting, but its value

as a means of developing theme-writing may, I think, be questioned. Just now there is quite a craze in our colleges for a study of the paragraph as the most important unit in composition. I must confess that I cannot attach such importance to a study of the paragraph. We speak of prospective, retrospective and transitional elements in a paragraph, but, if the mind has not been developed, so to speak, paragraphically, all this formal talk about it in the rhetoric class is but a waste of words—a waste of time.

* * *

Language is a living organism, and at best a knowledge of the rhetorical rules deduced from the expression of thought is not at all vital or essential to thought expression, and the hours, days and months spent in studying this verbal fashion-plate are, in my opinion, of very little value. The greatest value flows from a close and careful study of the office and inherent meaning of the word rather than from a study of the mode of expression, either in sentence or paragraph.

* * *

A well and clearly and logically developed mind, possessing an exact knowledge of the function of each word, will assuredly write clearly and elegantly and with all the graces of composition, though he or she may not have

studied a single paragraph in a class of rhetoric or composition. What we sorely need to-day is a more accurate knowledge of the words we use, and this we can obtain in one way and in one way only—by reading the great masters of English—a Newman, a Ruskin, a De Quincy, a Macaulay, a Matthew Arnold, an Emerson, a Bishop Spalding, a Goldwin Smith, a Charles A. Dana.

* * *

It is said that Emerson selected his words with the nice care with which a maiden crossing a brook chooses the dry pebbles whereon she safely steps to avoid the water. Again, as it is wisdom to be frugal in one's diet, so should economy also extend to our use of words. It is pitiable to see a thought buried beneath a great boulder of words. I think we English-speaking people treat our language with less consideration than any other people I know of. Listen to the language in our street cars, around the family table and in our society drawing-rooms and tell me if our good mother tongue could not every day indict us for verbal murder. We send our sons and daughters to colleges and academies to become educated, and they return with as shabby a garment of English as was the bodily vesture of the Prodigal Son when he returned to his father's house. I must

confess that I know no people to-day who understand and study their own language better than do the French. No wonder the language of Bossuet and Lamartine is a clear, artistic and logical vehicle for the expression of thought.

* * *

I think slang betrays or reflects superficiality of mind and poverty of language. Go to Ireland to-day and you will hear scarcely a slang word among its people. The poorest of its inhabitants are too rich in wealth of words to resort to slang. They may not talk elegantly, the peasantry of Ireland, but be assured that their language will be expressive and their thought always original. They have no need to resort to the language of the race-course nor to that of the baseball or football field. Slang you will certainly find in Europe, but the people who use it are classed and segregated, whereas here in America it has trickled and trailed through every grade of our social and intellectual life. A corrective of slang is the constant reading of clean, wholesome literature and the companionship of scholarly friends. Some one has said that God gives us our face, but we make our own countenance. It is equally true of our speech. I believe that God gave Adam in the Garden of Eden a fully rounded and developed

language—no doubt Eve improved a little on this, and her daughters have been following it up perseveringly ever since—but the countenance of language has been the work of man.

* * *

Have you ever remarked how delightful it is to meet with one, the garden of whose mind blossoms with the beauteous flowers of pure and goodly thought robed in the dews of choicest diction? It is indeed rest for the wearied soul, scorched and parched with the dry deserts of thought stretching ever around us. It is, too, as grateful as a fountain in a desert, for it renews our strength and makes us forget the toilsome miles ahead.

AS TO MAGAZINES

A WORD to-day about some current literature. This is the age of multiplied magazines and journals of every sort. Every school of thought, every religious body of any importance, every literary and artistic cult has its literary exponent or magazine. In a word, we are deluged with magazines—some valuable, some pernicious, some vicious.

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It is not too much to say that America has discovered the popular magazine. But America has not yet discovered the high class and truly informing magazine. The American magazine is not thought-provoking—it is often not even suggestive. It is entertaining and interesting, but does not contain a great deal of meat. Take for instance the Dublin Review. It has a tone and a literary value entirely superior to the best American literary magazine of our day. I suppose the Atlantic Monthly, staid and stereotyped in thought as it is, is the first of our American literary magazines.

* * *

But the Atlantic Monthly is not what it used to be in the days of Lowell, Longfellow and

Thomas Bailey Aldrich. It has somewhat fallen from literary grace and is a kind of gipsy child among the literary elite. It occasionally has a good paper up to the old standard, but its lapses are so many that its sins of omission linger in the literary memory.

* * *

We have too much "smart" writing here in America and not enough of scholarship and thought. The Atlantic Monthly had noble birth —it was born under good literary auspices and received its baptism in the regular literary way. But times have changed and some of its sister magazines have donned such glowing attire and frizzled their hair and played the adventuress— and all this with such success that a well behaved magazine like the Atlantic Monthly, correct in its character and bearing and always of a good moral tone, can scarcely hold its admirers any longer.

* * *

Among French periodicals "Les Annales Litteraires" is, I think, the best. The French excel in literary criticism, and it is not to be wondered at that their literary reviews are of a high order. Just fancy the late Ferdinand Brunetière at the head of a magazine. What judgments you might expect to get. He is unquestionably the greatest French critic since the days of Saint Beuve.

Go to Brussels and you will speedily learn what the Belgians are doing for criticism. Like the French they, too, have a standard. In America we have no standard. All kinds of literary heresies are taught in our universities. The professors are partisans. Is it any wonder that our magazines are also partisans? Take, for instance, the North American Review and the Forum. Glance at their literary reviews and you will soon learn what little real value can be often attached to them.

* * *

To be a good essayist is to be a good magazine writer and editor. Take James Russell Lowell. He was one of the most successful editors that the Atlantic Monthly ever had. Why? Simply because Lowell was a very prince of essayists. He had a command of clear-cut English rarely possessed by any other of his countrymen.

* * *

The editor of a magazine should be, above all, versatile. He need not necessarily be deep. In fact, if he is too deep for his readers, as was Dr. Brownson, his magazine will not satisfy his constituency. The people will murmur—they may read the magazine as a kind of imposed literary penance, but they will always read under protest. A well conducted magazine should meet the needs of the people, while at the same time it uplifts them.

CRITICS AND CRITICISM

A WORD to-day about criticism and reviews. Some one has said that a man becomes critical when he finds that he is not creative. I recently heard a professor lecturing to a class in elocution, and he wisely advised them never to criticise any reader unless they could do better themselves. Criticism should be the conscience of art and should have in it more construction than destruction. The critical faculty, as a general thing, is not very well developed among English-speaking people—that is, they lack standards and principles. It is true, they freely criticise, indeed often blindly.

* * *

I have more admiration and respect for French criticism along the line of art and literature than any other. Not that I would willingly agree with it in everything—for instance, in the French estimate of the drama—but the French mind is eminently logical, artistic and full of fair proportion. In this, as I have often said, it resembles the Greek mind. Of

course national prejudice often warps the judgment of the critic. I remember once picking up a little brochure in a book store in Rome. It was the work of an Englishman, in which he attacked the art methods of Michael Angelo and Raphael.

* * *

I read it carefully through just to learn what an Englishman had to say of the painters of the Last Judgment and the Transfiguration. It was certainly destructive criticism. He went at Michael Angelo's Moses, in the Church of St. Peter's in Chains, as would an Iconoclast in the days of image-smashing in the Eastern Church. This son of the North from the island of fogs and mists, whose people were busy bear-baiting, beer drinking, dreaming of conquest on sea and land, and burning martyrs at the stake, when Latin Spain and Italy were glorifying the canvases of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the dreams of a Murillo, a Titian and a Raphael, now assumes to lecture on the principles of sculpture and painting to the most inspired art children of the earth.

* * *

Let me say that deep sympathy is at the basis of all true and valuable criticism. Some think that the harder you hit the better is the criticism—that to peel the rind off, figuratively

speaking, is clever criticism. Now, as a matter of fact, criticism should be partly destructive and partly constructive—it should be both directive and suggestive.

* * *

There is a criticism, and a very large body of it, that is merely perfunctory. Anybody who has ever given to the public six or eight works and then read the reviews of the books in the different journals and magazines will understand fully what I mean when I say that a large body of criticism is merely perfunctory. It could not be otherwise, for two reasons. First, the reviewer frequently is dealing with a work whose merits he does not understand. Secondly, to say something about the book in a column of review often is his sole purpose and end. Often the question of merit is entirely aside.

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It will be remembered that Oliver Goldsmith, the author of "The Deserted Village," was for some time a reviewer of books on a magazine, and he always ended up his review with this safe and sane, though perfunctory, statement: "Had the author read more widely he would have written more intelligently." This, of course, is a truism and becomes bald in value when continually tacked on at the end of a review.

I think the critical side is much overdone in the study of literature in all our schools and colleges. Is it not time that we should take it for granted that Newman and Ruskin and Macaulay could write prose, and Tennyson, Longfellow and Wordsworth poetry? Continual criticism is fatal to assimilation, and all literary and art power must pass through the door of assimilation. A soul vital at every point, a soul open at every pore—if the expression may be allowed—this is the requisite in order to reach the best in literature.

ART

SOMETHING ABOUT ART

LET me chat with my readers to-day on the subject of art—especially that department of it which glorifies the canvas. All the fine arts—that is, music, architecture, poetry, painting and sculpture—are co-radical. Art is beauty born of the splendor of truth. Now God is absolute truth and, therefore, the source and inspiration of all art. The beauty of the creature, says St. Thomas Aquinas, is nothing else than a participation of the divine beauty by created beings.

* * *

With the advent of Christianity a new meaning was given to art. Ancient art rested in the finite. The best work of Phidias and Praxiteles has about it not a touch or hint of the infinite. It is born of the beauty of the earth and reflects as in a mirror its source and origin. But Christian art is of heaven and reveals the fullness and sanctity of its birth.

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The most beautiful, says Thales, the father of Greek philosophy, is the world because it is a work of God's own art. Goethe gives us the world of nature, but there is a higher one—the

world of grace and glory. According to St. Augustine, all beauty in created beings is derived from that beauty which is above the soul, and therefore creation leads us by its beauty to God.

* * *

Ancient art represented the gods in sensible, beautiful form, but nevertheless they are only greater men, more beautiful, stronger than we are, and immortal; but in their forms, their feelings and their passions they are simply mortals. Christianity, as a writer says, frees man from earthly bonds and fetters and directs his gaze heavenward. Christian art does not emphasize beautiful form as much as the ancient did. It does not despise it, but physical beauty which was everything to the Greek appears to the Christian as a secondary factor.

* * *

An art critic tells us that every work of art includes a two-fold element, the soul and its embodiment; the former is constituted by the idea, the latter enables this idea to become the object of man's contemplation; therefore the artist works with hand and mind. He elevates himself above the sensible and still remains in the sphere of the sensible, by endowing the supersensible with a sensible form. He is, therefore, as Goethe once expressed it, "the slave and master of nature."

Let us here for a moment glance at the expression of the soul in art, as it feels its way through the centuries. For myself I regard the Gothic cathedral as the sublimest expression of the human mind in art and the best conception ever born and cradled in the heart of man. The Gothic cathedral in its ripened fullness marks the culmination of the ages of faith. It is coeval with Dante's Divine Comedy and St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa and the Red Cross Knight of the Holy Land.

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It burst upon the vision of the world like some divine flower which, growing unseen in the night, fills at dawntide the whole garden with fragrance, subduing all eyes and hearts with its grace. Soon this great art, so deep in its spiritual splendor, covered, as a French historian tells us, all Europe with a white mantle of churches. It took root first in beauteous France at Sens about the time Thomas a'Becket, fleeing from the wrath of Henry II, found an asylum in that ancient city. This was the very beginning of Gothic architecture.

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When we turn to painting we see how slow was the transition from the stiff Byzantine mosaic portrait to the freedom of a Raphael or a Da Vinci or a Titian. Before Raphael, the prince of painters, had to come Cimabue and

Giotto, and the latter needed a St. Francis of Assisi and a Dante to evoke the great artistic visions of his soul. Then streamed upon the fair face of Italy such a glorious light from the painter's soul, that its rays to-day fill us with such wonder that we would for the moment willingly again dwell in these rich and storied aisles of the past and kneel as votaries at its spiritual shrines.

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And here comes up the question, who are the great painters of all time—the masters? It is assuredly difficult of answer. As with poetry, so with painting; it is a matter of taste and temperament. Raphael and Murillo—these twain should satisfy any heart and these twain are certainly among the great painters of all time. Add to these the names of Rubens, Titian, Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci, Velasquez and Michael Angelo and you have certainly a sextette of great painters, though the versatile Michael Angelo is unquestionably greatest as a sculptor.

ART AND ITS TIMES

ARE these our times productive of a great art or have we fallen upon small and barren days, devoid of spiritual inspiration, for that is really what all great art means. Let us make examination. The work of man is reaching upwards, not, however, in aspiration but in sky-scrapers. The earth and the things of earth have quite blinded man's vision. There are indeed few who pierce through this mesh of things—few who have spiritual vision and see arightly the things of God. The nations do not kneel —mankind, in its pride of heart, is too all-sufficient. It is not a question of sin, for there has always been sin in the world. The Ages of Faith had as big sinners as the most darkly stained epoch of modern times. But the Ages of Faith had ever eternity and the judgment and mercy of God before its eyes. It sinned, but it repented, and in this repentance consists its spiritual greatness. * * *

The spiritual world was a thing real to the men and women of the Middle Ages. They

acknowledged the presence of God in the great temple of life. This is clearly evident in its civilization, literature and art, for it was faith in God that inspired and fashioned its noblest works and monuments. The crusades are coeval with the Gothic cathedral, and the sublime song of Dante was but the inspired teaching of St. Thomas in verse. No age is greater than its spiritual endowment and no art is greater than its vision of God.

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To-day modern scholars busy themselves seeking moral hiatuses in the character of the great artists that illumine the Ages of Faith—a Raphael, a Dante, a Petrarch, a Michael Angelo, while their own household gods fill niches of unhallowed passions draped with the hand of so-called modern culture and refinement. These modern scholars rarely pause to take an inventory of the true state of life around them—they are so satisfied with the work of their own hands that they are blind in their appraisement of the work of God.

* * *

The spiritual note in art is everything. Humanity of itself can rear nothing but material structures. Humanity reared the temples of

the East, the temples and arenas of Greece and Rome, and they are but dust. But the Church of God, flying from the purple rage of the Caesars, sought shelter in the Catacombs and there carved in symbols the mysteries of our Holy Faith—symbols which will ever abide. It is heaven that immortalizes, not man, for the bays that bind the brow of earthly fame are withered at the very going down of the sun.

* * *

This spiritual note is greatly lacking in the art and literature of our day. Such art and literature cannot, therefore, survive the teeth of time. Trumpets may blow and heralds proclaim it, but already is woven for it the shroud of neglect and oblivion, for the soul of every age and people seeks for the abiding things of God, which the hand of man, however deft, cannot fashion.

* * *

Great books embalm the very soul of the age, great paintings reflect as in a mirror the very likeness of the time. Men's spiritual dreams, whether embodied in stone or arch or the glorious rhythmic creation of song, are the true records of a people and a key—an unerring key—to their holiest hopes and highest aspirations. They are volumes, vital in every page, with life and thought.

Those who come after us will not seek to learn what manner of age was ours by reading book reviews or the minutes of a literary club, nor will they seek to ascertain whose paintings were hung in the Paris Salons or whose books were amongst the six best sellers—they will put their spiritual finger upon the immortal page, the immortal canvas—the glorious dream that reached to heaven.

WOMAN: HER EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE

CONCERNING WOMAN

LET me speak to-day of the important question of the education of our girls, for after all, let statesmen enact what laws they will, let warriors fight what battles they will, in the last analysis it is woman who makes the nation. Indeed her position and condition are a true key to the civilization of any age or country. Take, for instance, the women of Homer, the women of Virgil, the women of Dante and the women of Shakespeare. Have you not in their characters a reflection of their times?

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And yet, as a writer tells us, revolution does not act on woman as it does on man; it does not enter so radically into her mental organization; therefore throughout the mutations of history she remains a clear and exhaustless spring in the depths of life, for its perennial beauty and refreshment; a constant heart in the midst of nations for their vitality, purity and charities.

* * *

But to return to the theme proper of my "Chats" to-day, what, I ask, should be the character of the education of a girl intended to be

a home-builder—a light in the sanctuary of the home? This is assuredly a pertinent and timely question in an age when woman, her activities and influence, are gaining an attention which they never did before.

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Perhaps in no other country in the world has the education of woman so occupied the public mind as in this our own land. Indeed it is only here that one sees such institutions as Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Trinity, which are universities in fact, founded and endowed for the advanced education of women. There is nothing like them in the Old World, in England, France or Germany. The New World is also full of tentative schemes. It has fads and fashions growing on every rose bush. Is its higher education of woman a fad? Let us examine it.

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There is no denying it that home-building is as natural to a woman as nest-building is to a bird. Every woman is born with this instinct in her heart, and those who depart from its purpose should be the exception. But in face of figures often quoted to the contrary, the intellectual ambition which induces young girls to turn their faces from the sanctuary of home and yearn for the altitudes—the pinnacles of scholarly fame that are only reached after a lifetime of labor—breaks up this fair dream of home,

robs it of its fair attractiveness and crushes out that instinct which makes woman the altar of civilization and the moral regenerator of the race.

* * *

You perhaps say in reply that all this higher education—this study of Sanskrit, Hebrew, the Higher Mathematics, Goethe and the literature of Persia—will make her a stronger, fuller and better woman within the precincts of home. Is this really so? Is it not true that where thought goes the heart follows? We look for long years of apprenticeship as preparation for life's work of head and hand. The intellectual training obtained through four years of legal study in the absorption of Blackstone or Story will not do for the setting of a broken bone or the diagnosis of a complicated case—why, then, expect that a course in higher education will fit a young woman for the responsibilities of a home? They are not one whit more kindred than law or medicine. Each requires separate and special training, and it is folly for enthusiasts to declare that the college-educated woman is superior within the home.

* * *

In the first place, what does she know of home? Till the age of eighteen she has spent every moment of her life in preparation for entrance into the university. Her next four years are spent in the laboratory, library or lecture-

room of the university. Now, where comes in her knowledge of home? If there is a domestic science what does she or what can she know of it? When her husband comes home from the shop, the broker's office or the bank, she meets him at the dinner table with a smile and an array of half-baked cakes and love flies out at the window, for how can love and a bad case of dyspepsia dwell together? She may be able to read Plato in the original and talk in the lost language of the Goths, but what do these attainments avail her in the presence of the facts which hold sovereignty in her household? Her home, after all, is her true world just now and should and must be, as long as she remains a true woman.

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But, pray, let not the reader mistake my meaning here. I do not or would not glorify the greatness or dignity of household drudgery. There is no dignity in labor of any kind—it is rather the spirit in which we perform our task that lends dignity to toil. Dignity belongs to ourselves, not our work. What more dignity is there in the art of music than there is in the science which presides over the kitchen? None whatever.

SOME MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

A STUDY of the various customs, which obtain in different countries, in the matter of engagements between young men and women, might be worthy of a place in our "Chats," seeing that the giving in marriage is not at all modern, but reaches back to the very Garden of Eden. I take it, however, that the preliminaries leading up to the engagement of Adam and Eve have never been published. All we know is that Adam had a deep sleep and, as there were no elevated railroads around Eden, Adam probably put extras in the contract, and then, after the rib was removed and he had rubbed his wondering eyes well, he beheld his fiancée; but, happily for him, no mother-in-law was in sight, and he had not to produce his bank cheque-book.

* * *

Ever since those remote days, all Eve's daughters have been plighting their word in marriage, but the method or procedure has changed with the times, and to note this varied method is the purpose of my "Chat" to-day.

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In ancient days and, indeed, in the Middle Ages, children were betrothed in their cradle,

and frequently saw each other for the first time only on the day of their marriage. This, of course, saved a great deal of the expense of our modern joy-rides, excursions and private boxes at the theater, but it really cut out also all the attendant anxiety and fear of diplomatic smash-ups.

* * *

In no other country in the world is such freedom accorded young women and men engaged as here in America. The nearest approach to this is in Germany and Switzerland. In both of these countries a young man and woman engaged are free to travel together, go for walks together, attend the theater and all social reunions without any chaperone. In England and America young girls become engaged at their own sweet will and then inform their parents of the affair.

* * *

In France, where the marriage of "convenance" prevails largely, and where the dowry is a most important factor in the marriage scheme, the young man can never see his intended bride save in the presence of her parents, and in this way often the marriage is concluded between two young persons who are well-nigh strangers to each other. From my own observations, while living in France, I should say that there are ten marriages with love as basis here in America for one of the

same kind in France. And yet, I am not sure but a French woman can hold and retain better the love of her husband than an American woman. To discuss why, would take me too far afield here.

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In Transylvania a marriage fair is held every year for young girls. The fathers drive to the market with their most precious wealth—their daughters—in a carriage, and, when they have reached the place, the auction commences. The father cries out, "I have a daughter to marry; who has a son wishing a wife?" They wrangle over the dowry, and finally the agreement is struck after much haggling.

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In Lapland, when a young man goes to ask the hand of a young girl in marriage, he takes care to go always fortified with a good supply of whisky. In fact, in order that the bargain may be struck, it is generally necessary to have drunk several bottles and have smoked several packages of tobacco. This has led, among the Laplanders, to the habit of prolonging the engagement as much as possible—at least one or two years—so that the presents of whisky and tobacco may be more numerous and multiplied.

GOVERNMENT

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

LET me chat with my readers on government and systems of government and incidentally refer to parliamentary procedure. The English Parliament is called the "Mother of Parliaments" and perhaps justly so. Generally speaking, a form of government grows out of the needs of the people. There is practically, then, no best form of government. There are conditions where a monarchy is best; there are conditions where a tempered absolutism works best; there are conditions where nothing but a republic or, if you will, democracy, will suit the wishes and needs of the people.

* * *

Here in our own country republican institutions have struck down their roots so deeply that a change to any other form of government would not be tolerated by the people. I remember well when President Grant returned from girdling the world in the seventies; he was so far the idol of the people that, in a report of the reception tendered him, I think it was in New York, one of the papers, quoting Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," said, "They thrice presented

him a kingly crown which he did thrice refuse." So as far back as the seventies, you see, there was a hint of imperialism in the American mind in certain quarters. It touches the pride of a ruler to wear a crown, although the prince of dramatists has said, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." * * *

But the air cleared and the White House escaped the trappings of imperial pomp and show and our country, cradled in republicanism, has traveled along its path of progress, the wonder and admiration of the nations of the earth. This, notwithstanding the fact that its footsteps have been and are to-day beset with many dangers. What we hope will always save this goodly commonwealth is the great common sense of its people, for Americans are eminently intuitive and practical.

* * *

Now intuitive and practical seem at first sight to be at variance with each other. Not so, however. Intuitive does not necessarily mean idealistic or theoretical, but rather the power of discerning a truth through experience, without any process of reasoning or deduction. This really valuable gift, I hold, Americans possess in a high degree, and this with their great commonsense way of looking at things will, I consider, hold them almost always within the orbit of wise government and free from national crimes.

Another and a greater danger, I consider, threatens the life of our commonwealth. It is the loosening of the moral bonds which hold society together. Some one has said that, were it not that the American people are so engrossed in the making of money, their moral pace would be more startling than that of France of to-day. But the truth is that our country quite outstrips the France of to-day in many of its besetting sins. We sometimes smugly forget our record. In the divorce court we surpass every other nation save Japan, which has three times as many divorces as our country, while we, on the other hand, have more than three times as many divorces as France. If you would know the dangers that beset the rule of the people, consider well the fact that aside from Japan, which is an oriental country where marriage has never been considered aught but a civil contract, the three foremost republics of our day—the United States, France and Switzerland—lead the world in divorce—nay, have more than five times as many divorces as all the other civilized and Christian countries put together. Is this not freedom gone mad?

* * *

Again, our record for homicides is equally startling. Dr. Andrew D. White, ex-president of Cornell University, recently pointed out that we have more homicides in proportion to our

population than any three countries in the world. In the face of these facts it is difficult to be optimistic for our future. With respect to our national government, yes; with respect to the enforcement of law and order and the protection of life and the observance of God's laws delivered on Mount Sinai, the future of our country is certainly not too bright.

* * *

But I think I hear you say, "Remove the causes." Yes, but these causes are deep-seated and many. Only the teaching of the Catholic Church can eventually hold our country in its moral orbit. When the moral mercury drops low at the portals of our homes no legislation, however well directed, can rectify it. This thing is from God and is not of the councils of men. Civic order may indeed be restored and the protection of life secured and crime in the public eye reduced, but the altar of the home around which kneels the nation is tended by acolytes of faith and hope and love—obedience to the Divine will and a hearkening to those spiritual guides — the priesthood of God — to whom has been entrusted the salvation of our souls.

LITERATURE

LYRIC POETRY

LET me chat to-day about the lyric as a form of poetry. The lyric, of course, is entirely personal—purely subjective. It deals with an emotion. It is always simple not complex, and he is the best writer of lyrics who lays bare in simple and direct language the sentiment which sways his heart. * * *

The lyric at times stirs up the drama, the ballad and sometimes the epic, though its presence is felt but little in the latter. It also abides in the sonnet and the ode. Take for instance Shakespeare's tragedy of Romeo and Juliet—its very flood-light is the lyrical. Never did emotion in a drama hold the stage in its possession as in this beautiful lyrical drama. The minor chord of portending catastrophe for the "star-crossed" lovers rings through it from the outset, and pity and sighs form its sad course.

* * *

Every country in the world has its lyric writers and, unlike to the drama, the lyric has not found expression in epochs, for it belongs equally to every age. To-day Germany is decidedly richer in lyrics than any other country of Europe. This can easily be accounted for. The Germans are full of sentiment—patriotic,

convivial, amorous. German poetry is full of love songs, and the Teuton cares not if the whole world knows that he is fast in the meshes of love. Travel, for instance, through Germany and you will meet these "verlobt" parties in the compartments of the trains, and they will take a particular pride in telling you how long they are engaged. You will find a good deal of the same frankness in the English people.

* * *

The poetry of Scotland is also very rich in lyrics. The Scottish nature is deep and warm and convivial, albeit in sentiment it is under certain circumstances cautious and reserved. It would be difficult to match Burns as a lyric poet, though for finish and delicacy of thought he is not equal to Tom Moore. Burns' lyrics have the fragrance of the heather and the joy of the wind-swept waste in them. He is essentially the lyric poet of democracy, and his notes of independence and freedom have a double value, seeing that they had birth in a time when class distinction dominated his native land.

* * *

Irish lyrics have a tenderness and flavor all their own. The love lyric of Ireland is made up of homage and extravagance. Compared with the confession of love vowed by an Irish wooer the warm sentences of Romeo in the moonlit garden of Verona are but as water unto wine. It goes without saying, therefore, that an Irish-

man is the best wooer in the world. His kinsman in Brittany is of a like nature. So both Brittany and Ireland are rich in love lyrics. The courts of love that marked the home of the ancient troubadour have not yet in either land "folded their tents like the Arabs and silently stolen away." * * *

The greatest patriotic lyric ever written was composed by a Frenchman—De Lisle. Yet its greatness abides in the music rather than in the words. The Marseillaise is the most stirring martial lyric ever composed, though, as I have indicated already, its words do not amount to much. But its music is superb. It has all the proud soaring ardor of "la belle France" in its every note. People who sing such a song could never be a subject people. It is keyed in a measure of triumph. Its every note, lofty and thrilling, denotes victory.

* * *

We have been too busy in America to produce a great body of lyrics, nor has our national song yet been written. Neither "The Star-Spangled Banner" nor "America" nor the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" voices the heart of this great and growing land. Some day it will be written and it will thrill. The land of the Maple set under the stars of the North has found a noble, patriotic expression in the beautiful lyric "Canada"—the work of a gifted French-Canadian.

THE TRUE POET

IT is said that every one is a poet in embryo. The shepherd who stands upon the hillside to look at the rainbow—the covenant of God's promise set in the heavens—or the waning sun as it sinks to rest while, as the Elizabethan poet says, all nature blushes at the performance, is quite as much the poet as the inspired singer of lofty rhymes, though he may not have embodied his soul-dreams in the measured music of verse.

* * *

Yet it must be confessed that your true poet is something more than a lover of beauty. The first essential of a true poem is that it should have pulse in its lines—that there should be a soul-current bearing it up—that its music be the notes of true inspiration. It will be remembered that Edgar Allen Poe, no mean authority as to the true principles of poetry, maintains in his essay on "The Poetic Principle" that no long poem can be true poetry. The author of "The Raven" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" would thereby exclude such poems as Milton's "Paradise Lost," Goethe's "Faust" and Dante's "Divine Comedy."

The great mistake made to-day in the appraisement of poetry is that we magnify technique and the artistic, forgetting that, after all, neither one nor the other constitutes the supreme life or value of a true poem. We have this artistic sense so overdone that in ninety per cent of the poems that appear in our current magazines there is no evidence of the least inspiration, nor is there any thought that could not be just as well expressed in prose form.

* * *

There are writers of verse to-day who, while their wings do not trail in the dust, move along so low a plane that their poetry, if indeed it may be termed poetry, has caught the color and stain of the earth. How far the late Francis Thompson was removed from this those who have read his great poem, "The Hound of Heaven," know full well. Thompson is the very best exemplar of what I am contending for—that poetry is of the soul—it is vision; it is imagination; it is fire. Yes, fire, from the altar of true inspiration, borne by the thurifers of God, who stand eternally at the altar of Truth and Beauty and serve God in the great temple of Life.

* * *

There is no doubt that here in America we have been paying too much tribute to mere artistry in poetry. Just analyze the work of

such poets as Richard Henry Stoddard, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Richard Watson Gilder, all of the artistic school, and you will readily recognize that all four lack the real pulse of poetry—the divine fire of inspiration. It is quite true that all four have written some charming poems, full of the glow of beauty and hallowed as the breath and memory of a sacred shrine, but they lack that miracle of thought, that Patmos of the soul, which gives our earth hints and glints of the spiritual beauty beyond—which expresses life in terms of eternity set to the music and melody of eternal beauty. * * *

The true poet is a prophet of the people and, if true to the gifts given him of God, will lead the world to the higher tablelands of life and living. He has been consecrated for his divine office of song by a gift of God, and, if he does not turn from his high vocation and look down towards Camelot, he will assuredly bless the earth, and the seedlings of his grace will take root and blossom in all the gardens of mankind.

THE TECHNIQUE OF POETRY

TO-DAY my chat shall be academic and intended more particulary for those who are interested in poetry on the side of its technique. It is Mrs. Browning who says that every spirit builds its own house. To my mind much time is lost in many of our schools and colleges studying the technique of poetry, quite apart from the feeling or emotion which, through its unifying action, shapes, fashions and molds the whole poem.

* * *

Be assured that when the inspiration is strong and the fires burning at their full height metre, melody, rhyme and all the coefficients of poetic expression will take care of themselves. This is what Mrs. Browning means when she says that every spirit builds its own house.

* * *

A study of the technique of any art is unquestionably interesting and of value, but it is not a primary factor in the study of art, and to emphasize it as such is to lose sight of the function and meaning of all art. Take, for instance, the

vocal interpretation of poetry. Only through a comprehension of the thought, which begets sympathy and thereby places the reader in the position and mood of the writer of the poem, can any reader hope to achieve success.

* * *

The laws or principles that govern any art flow out of the divine essence or energy of the art—whether the art be poetry, sculpture, music or painting. Indeed, imagination and feeling constitute almost the whole of art. Take these out of poetry and what have you got? For instance, rob the work of Shakespeare or Dante, Milton or Goethe of imagination or feeling, and you make these poets poor, indeed.

* * *

All forms of poetry, too, seek their own appropriate metre, verse and stanza. Look at descriptive poetry, for instance, or narrative or didactic. It has a metre peculiar to itself—a metre which grows out of the needs of the theme. Tennyson never could have built up his great metaphysical poem and elegy "In Memoriam," had he employed a stanza in which the first and third lines rhymed, for it would have stemmed and stopped the flow of his great organ thought, which keys so sublimely this whole cathedral of song.

How well poetic thought laden with the full fire of inspiration seeks out its own metre is seen in such poems as Browning's "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" and Tom Hood's "Bridge of Sighs." Notice the hurry and commotion in the first and the strain of nervous tension and pathos in the second, and how well the flow of verse voices or reflects both.

* * *

Perhaps the greatest master of melody among modern English poets was Swinburne. Yet, there are passages in Tennyson that it would be difficult to match. This ear for fine melody on the part of the poet is a distinct gift in itself. Spenser possessed it in a high degree. Indeed, it may be questioned if any other English poet equals the author of the "Faerie Queen" in the melodious marshalling of words.

* * *

Then we have that strange poetic genius and friend of Wordsworth's, Coleridge, whose two poems, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel," are full of passages of wonderful melody. Nor should we forget Shelley — the ethereal Shelley, who spread his poetic wings in air so rare and high that never before had genius sought to sail such distant seas of thought, nor sing from summits that seemed to pierce

the blue pavilion of heaven. These then are the great masters of poetic melody—Spenser, Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson and Swinburne.

* * *

Speaking of the melody in Tennyson's poetry reminds me that, while the author of "The Idylls of the King" has rarely been surpassed as a master of melody, he was never able to achieve any success as a musician. Browning, however, though his verse is often rugged, zigzag and full of strange stops, was a musician of far more than ordinary gifts. How paradoxical then is not genius. We think of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who, it is said, should have painted his poems and written his paintings. Perhaps in the case of Rossetti and Browning the fires of inspiration did not burn strong enough.

SOME IRISH AUTHORS

A WORD with my reader about Irish authors. Is there a national poet of Ireland in the sense that Schiller represents Germany or Burns represents Scotland and, if there is one, who is he? Of course the name of Tom Moore at once leaps to the lips. But was Moore really an Irish national poet?

* * *

I scarcely think the author of the "Irish Melodies" and "Lallah Rookh" can be said to have voiced Ireland in national hopes and her dearest dreams. Moore was never the poet of the common people as Burns was, yet he did a great work for Ireland, especially among the upper classes of the English, for his beautiful lyrics penetrated the drawing-rooms of England—drawing-rooms alien to himself and his ideals.

* * *

Nor can it be denied that the poet breathed an Irish soul into his work. One thing is certain, that Moore is not only the sweetest of all Irish lyric writers but the sweetest song writer of the English-speaking world. There is

a mingling of melody and Celtic witchery in his lines, but he is really not an Irish poet of patriotic action and inspiration.

* * *

Nor can Moore be called a poet of the "Irish Cause"—not at least in the sense that Thomas Davis was. Take Davis' "The West's Awake." Why, there is more fire in its lines than in all Tom Moore ever wrote. Yet I would not have you believe that I depreciate Tom Moore. He is a glorious child of Erin, rocked and dandled and lulled to patriotic rest by the admiring throngs of English drawing-rooms.

* * *

The destruction of Ireland's nationality was the destruction of her art. What Irish genius might have done, had it not beaten its wounded and bleeding wing against the iron bars of oppression, we know not. I make no doubt, had Ireland been free to fashion her immortal dreams in marble or on the canvas or in lofty rhyme or in the subtle notes of song, perhaps we would have had an Irish Michael Angelo or an Irish Dante or an Irish Raphael or an Irish Wagner.

* * *

But Ireland is young yet in the plenitude of spiritual power. She is just now being taken to the font for national baptism. She has yet to feel her life in every limb. The youngest

amongst us may see such a renaissance of Irish art as will astonish the world. She has, thank God, the spiritual endowment, and that means everything.

* * *

Nor as yet has the Irish novel been written. Carleton and Lever and Banim and Maria Edgeworth and Gerald Griffin have given us something, but that something falls far below the possibilities in Irish fiction. No one has yet portrayed in fiction the eternal heart of Ireland. Perhaps this will be done by an Irish exile. It is only when separated from our mother that we fully value her tenderness and love.

* * *

I would like to see a greater appreciation of the Celt in literature. I would like our Irish societies to bring out in their programs what Irish genius stands for—its sublimity, its reverence, its vision, its spirituality. The soul of the Celt rests upon the mountain peaks of life, under the tents of God, with the stars for altar tapers drenched in the eternal dews of heaven.

A WORD ABOUT TRANSLATIONS

I DESIRE to chat to-day with my readers about translations of English classics that are made in various foreign languages. Every student who has ever taken a college arts course knows full well the help and danger that lurk in translations—help if these translations are used wisely and judiciously, danger if they are used as a "pony" to bear up and land the student across the stream of examinations, without having to buffet the strong current of toil and study.

* * *

I regard translation as the supreme test of language study and language acquirement. To translate an ode of Horace into good English verse one must know well Horatian Latin, as well as its equivalent in English.

* * *

The late Professor Goldwin Smith could make the most accurate and felicitous translation of Latin verse that I have ever known. And why? Simply because, in the first place, he was a distinguished Latin scholar, and, in the second place, he had a command of English possessed by few other scholars in our day.

One of the most difficult of translations is Shakespeare. The great master dramatist, as is well known, is translated into well-nigh all the European languages, but German scholars have succeeded much the best in this effort or task. There are two reasons for this: German scholars are both thorough and painstaking, and again Shakespearean mode of thought is much more kindred to the German mind than it is to either the French, Italian or Spanish mind.

* * *

For, after all, if you leave out the Celtic element—that mystery and magic which run like a golden thread through so many of his plays and which is essentially Celtic—Shakespeare is a literary cousin of the master poets of Germany, though separated from them by a gulf of many years. Again, aside from the mode of thought, if you leave out the Latinized words how close do not the German words come to the Anglo-Saxon, especially in their social and suggestive meaning?

* * *

Taken in all, however, the Italians do into their mother tongue more foreign classics than any people in Europe. Why, it is simply amazing what a knowledge a well educated Italian wo-

man has of Byron, Tennyson, Longfellow, Shakespeare, as well as such prose writers as Ruskin and Macaulay. I will hazard the opinion that to-day in Rome can be found ten times as many women who have read the plays of Shakespeare and the poems of Longfellow, as there are Chicago women who know Dante and Carducci. Yet we sometimes smugly consider ourselves superior to the world.

* * *

Let me here give first the English text of Longfellow's beautiful sonnet on the "Divine Comedy" of Dante, which usually precedes in our poet's translation of the Florentine's great trilogy, the "Inferno":

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

Now here is a German translation of this beautiful sonnet. How far the translator, unknown to me, has caught the spirit, the reader having a good knowledge of German may judge:

Oft sah an Pforten mancher Kathedraele
  Ich einen Werksmann der vor Staub und Schwuele,
  Sein Bundel hinwarf und im Nahgefuehle
Der Gottheit sich bekreuzt an dem Portale
  Manch Paternoster sprach verklaert vom Strahle
  Der Andacht, er in solcher duft gen Kuehle;
Der Strassen Laerm, das laute Marktgewuehle,
Ward leis' Gesumme hier mit einem Male.
So mag ich buerdelos, mit taeglich neu
  Erweckter Inbrunst auch zum Muenster schreiten
  Und knieend beten—beten sonder Scheu!
Da stirbt mir der Tumult trostloser Zeiten
  Verhallend im Germurmel hin,—doch treu
Umsteht die Hochwacht mich der Ewigkeiten.

SNOBS, FADS AND CUSTOMS

AS TO SNOBS AND SNOBBERY

THE subject of my chat to-day will be snobbery. It will be remembered that the great English novelist, Thackeray, has a book on snobs, and any one who observes — who travels with what the French say, "les yeux grands ouverts," eyes wide open—cannot but see that every land has its snobs. Thackeray certainly had no lack of subjects in England, for, if there is any land in the whole world cursed by snobbery, it is England. Your English snob is the fullest fledged of any.

* * *

Some few weeks ago Joseph Smith, a member of the Papyrus Club of Boston, and an intimate friend and admirer of the late John Boyle O'Reilly and James Jeffrey Roche, contributed a paper on "Snobs and Snobbery" to the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post. This paper was very cleverly written and treated of the different kinds of snobs. In this paper Mr. Smith says that a true man seeks eminence while a snob seeks prominence; the one fame, the

other notoriety; one struggles for a place in the heart and history of the age; the other for a position in the eye and ear of his generation.

* * *

Easy money, says Mr. Smith, is the fertilizer of the soil in which snobbery flourishes; easy money is the mother of vulgarity, pretense and ostentation; the maker of the habits and manners that clothe the newly rich like ill-fitting garments.

* * *

In England you will not find much snobbery among the nobility. They have secured long ago their position. They are not striving to be in the public eye; they are in the public eye without any striving.

* * *

In England it is the middle class—the imitators, the would-be aristocracy, what the French call "les poseurs"—who thrust every day snobbery in your face. Of course, the women are the greatest sinners in this respect—they it is who in every land divide up society into "sets" and curse social life with either "small talk" or scandal. When you get a noble woman, really intellectual and yet unassuming, she is verily an altar before which to worship, but perhaps the greatest weakness in the whole feminine make-up is that she is so given to playing a role —that she rarely is what she seems.

Man is conceited, but woman is vain, and herein lies the difference between the twain. Did you ever observe two women, ambitious to appear other than they are, become acquainted for the first time? It runs something like this: "I'm delighted to meet you, Mrs. Blank. So you're from Detroit? My husband is well acquainted there. By the way, do you know Colonel ——? He's the vice-president of the Michigan Central, and a great friend of ex-President Roosevelt. When the ex-President goes to Detroit, he always stays with him." "No, I am not acquainted with him, but I have a friend who knows him well. By the way, are you acquainted in Chicago? Do you know Judge ——, who is spoken of as President Taft's choice for the vacancy in the Supreme Court?"

* * *

This is assuredly a species of snobbery and a species very common. Then we have intellectual snobbery—the desire to appear learned. Look to-day at the rush that is made to appear in portrait in the papers, all of which is a vulgar thirst for notoriety, and this in itself is of the very breath and life of veritable snobbery.

* * *

Why, a few little girls cannot graduate in some elementary school, having acquired the rudiments of spelling, arithmetic and geography, but their friends move heaven and earth

—and the editors, to get their photos in the papers. Time was when appearing in portrait with a "write up" in a paper signified distinguished merit—in authorship, scholarship, art or philanthropy, but that time has passed and real merit now, instead of being distinguished, has become mediocrized—vulgarized. And all this is snobbery. * * *

I must confess that I have found less snobbery in France than in any other country in the world. The Frenchman is not without his faults, but snobbery is certainly not one of them. Charge him with artificiality and insincerity in his courtesy and politeness if you will, you cannot charge him with being a snob. I think the reason for this is found in the fact that your Frenchman appreciates too well values and real merit to countenance sham even for a moment. Of course, under the republic, France has in this respect degenerated, and the conferring of the Legion of Honor has no longer the value it used to have in the beauteous land of St. Genevieve. * * *

Next to England, Prussia in Germany has the most snobbery in the world. The Rhinelanders and the Bavarians are devoid of it. They are too—what the Germans call "gemuethlich"—amiable to be snobbish, but the Prussian—whew! "stolz," "kalt"—overbearing. It is said that an Englishman dearly loves a lord—yes, and a German dearly loves a title.

AS TO FADS

A WORD with my readers about "fads." Assuredly there is an abundance of them in this our day. I suppose they always existed, but the craze for novelty ever grows stronger and normal life and living, normal points of view, normal thought, normal atmosphere, seem to be yielding more and more to the erratic and abnormal, thus creating an unhealthy condition of life.

* * *

Could we, however, go back to the days of the Caesars we would find that under Roman skies civilization had its fads, and leaders of fads. The world has had and always will have characters neither well poised nor normal, no matter under what star they may happen to be born. The hobble skirt and the merry widow headgear were no doubt unknown to Fulvia and Agrippina, but these Roman matrons, too, had their fashion fads.

* * *

We sometimes blame women for being more given to fads than men, but it is largely a matter of temperament. Then, too, while the character of woman has changed less through the centuries than that of man, the adventitious in

her nature has undergone greater changes. If you study the "modes" of the last five centuries you will see that, save in knee-breeches, buckled shoes and the time-honored ruffles — of course not forgetting wigs—man's attire has been largely constant.

* * *

But the case is not so with woman. Every half century—nay, quarter century—has completely transformed her, as set forth in the fashion plates. Yet a good reason can be given for this. The artistic in woman is pronounced, while in man it is only accidental. A few men study good taste in dress, while woman ever reads its volume from cover to cover. Of course there are exceptions, but generally speaking a woman short in stature and great in longitude knows better than to gown in an equatorial check so loud that it may be heard and seen across the street.

* * *

Perhaps woman is more erratic in her fads in art than in anything else. She will study Japanese art, whose inspiring conception is as full of splendor as sunbeams and no more coherent, while she knows absolutely nothing of Christian art as developed through the Byzantine, the Renaissance or modern school. I once saw an audience of women entertained by a Japanese lecturer, his subject being Japanese Art, and

whose little barking voice could not be heard beyond the third row of seats, and I would be willing to wager a Klondike mine that not a woman present at the lecture could give the names of five great Italian painters. They were simply chasing a fad.

* * *

It may be accepted as a certainty that everything that departs from the normal—in life, literature or art—is an injury to character development. So all women of our day who forget the purposes of true womanhood really retard the progress of our race. The same applies to men. Your effeminate man puts back the dial hands of civilization and progress.

* * *

If we could only put these faddists in straight jackets as motley-colored as their views, and keep them confined in a corner of God's earth where they would not "stain the white radiance of eternity," giving them rainbow toys to play with and cheap mirrors to reflect their own vanity, why, then, civilization would not suffer. The dreams of poets would soon be realized, for the true ideals of the soul, not warped by faddists, would find expression in our lives and would thereby link the truth and beauty of this earth to the splendor of heaven.

SOME CUSTOMS

NO one who has traveled to any extent in the various countries of Europe but must have noticed what marked difference exists in the customs of the different peoples. These customs have grown out of the life of the people and are really a very part of it. For instance, the Carnival celebration preceding Ash Wednesday is now so fixed in the life of the people of Germany and France and Austria that no order of either Church or State would avail in its repeal or abandonment.

* * *

Sometimes this Carnival celebration leads to much abuse, as in Germany at Cologne and Munich. Too much license is permitted and revelry gets the better of sound sense and morality. There is still something of the untamable in every one and, if all restraint is thrown off even for three Carnival days, human nature —poor human nature—suffers. Nothing shows more the poise of character than the wisdom that guides youth across these Carnival days.

* * *

Europe is a very old continent and it has all the characteristics of old age. It is courteous,

serious, thoughtful, "full of wise saws and modern instances," as Shakespeare would say. It likes repose—sumptuous living, court splendors, royal etiquette, full dress and courtly epithet. But it has, too, something of decreptitude in its step, a hollowness and squeak in its voice, wrinkles in its laughter and semblance in its tears.

* * *

You will not find in Europe the rich optimism of America. It has lost long ago the sweet visions of youth. But it is full of wisdom—"the wisdom of a thousand years is in its eyes." Yet we love America better because of its mistakes. They are the mistakes of youth. They are mistakes of the head, not of the heart. America is a full-grown boy—rich in the promise of manhood, clear in spiritual vision, large in the charity of the soul.

* * *

European politeness is called by some "four-flushing" or "bluffing." It is true it is often not real. But what of that? Is all our friendship in America real? How much of it around us has not a business ring to it? Could we but understand fully the motive behind some of it, we would perhaps cease designating European politeness "four-flushing." The truth is sincerity belongs to the individual and not to a race or country or continent.

To a traveler touring Europe one of the most striking things is how universally obtains the habit of smoking. Europe seems to be but one great pipe from Amsterdam to Naples. There is scarcely an exception to this. Belgium and Holland are clouded with smoke—perhaps this is why their painters excel in cloud effects. Smoking is to the Belgian what snuffing is to the Frenchman.

* * *

While traveling in a compartment in Europe —though some of these compartments, as in America, are specially set aside for smoking— it is a common thing for a gentleman in a compartment occupied by ladies to pull out a cigar and, striking a match, bow with all the address of a true courtier, and, while the match is on its way to meet the end of the cigar, ask of the ladies "permission" for his indulgence.

* * *

To a man from the New World here across the Atlantic this request on the part of the smoker, after he has already almost begun action, seems indeed humorous. But I suppose it is all right in Europe. The humorous and ridiculous point of view in Europe and America is quite different, and as long as the ladies of Europe consider it all right we have no right to complain. It is Old World form and courtesy and I suppose quite correct.

SOME MORE CUSTOMS

HOW much we are slaves to customs is realized by any one who has traveled and observed. What is regarded as good form and good manners, for instance, among the Latin races is often a violation of good form and good manners among English and Teutonic races. Even our own country, here in the New World, is sharply differentiated from Europe in many of its social customs. Nothing is more amusing here in America than the abhorrence with which many American women view the habit of smoking among men, as if it were a deadly and unpardonable sin, forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come.

* * *

Not long ago, for instance, I heard two Chicago young ladies criticise severely a young man because he used tobacco, declaring that it was a habit unbecoming a well bred man, and, while thus pronouncing judgment on the young man, they twisted and wallowed in their mouth a supply of Zeno's gum that would make

any corner of Europe prick up its ears and look aghast. And yet they thought they were models of good breeding and good form.

* * *

In this respect a story is told of a Chicago girl—South Side one—who died, and, when St. Peter unbarred the portal and let her into the pearly street, she at once looked around for Zeno's gum-slot and, not finding it, was heard to exclaim: "Well, Paradise is a pretty dull place without Zeno's gum-slot! I guess I'll hie back to Chicago, where I can see the Cubs and White Sox play, and chew gum in the private box of any theater. These Seraphim are behind the times."

* * *

Of course, ardent gum-chewers hold that the habit prevailed in ancient days—that gum-chewing was a common thing in old Roman homes in the time of Cicero and Caesar, and that in the days of Fulvia and Agrippina gum-chewing was a great prevention of gossiping, the women being so busy kneading the gum under their tongue that they had no time to devote to their neighbors' hobble skirts. Indeed, we have some proof of this in the play of Julius Caesar, where Cassius says to Brutus, "Brutus, chew upon this."

Speaking of smoking reminds me that in several countries the men smoke around the table, in the presence of the ladies, at the end of the meal. I have seen this done in Mexico, and the women did not seem at all shocked. I can also never understand why here in America in a public elevator, when a woman enters, the men should uncover their heads—and this, too, at a risk of getting a bad cold. Men walk around the office of a hotel frequently with their hats on; why should they take them off in a public elevator? Simply because it is the custom.

* * *

The first time I attended a ball or dancing party in Germany I was very much struck with certain German customs that prevailed. For instance, when a young man enters the room, having divested himself of his coat, hat and gloves, he goes around the room and introduces himself, announcing himself with a bow nearly akin to an Oriental salaam. At first it seemed laughable, but after all it is merely custom and is quite as sensible as our method of introducing a new arrival.

* * *

The habit of minding one's own business prevails a good deal more in Europe than in America. This, I think, arises from the spirit

of monarchial government. In a democracy, where everybody is as good as everybody else, and better, the sense of propriety is often forgotten. We think so much of ourselves and so little of the importance and standing of others that we often assume that mere citizenship gives us the right to interfere in and criticise matters entirely outside of the orbit of our duty or social surrounding. Of course this criticism, too, has its value, but it sometimes leads to unpleasantness, to say the least.

THE STAGE AND THE READING DESK

SOME MEMORIES OF GREAT ACTORS

I DESIRE to chat to-day with my readers on the subject of the stage and some of the actors I have seen during the past thirty years. Shakespeare, it will be remembered, has said that all the world is a stage, and some bright woman has added recently, "Yes, but the stage is not all the world." * * *

I must make confession to my readers that to me, since my very boyhood, the theater has been a passion, for I have always loved to see life unfold itself before me in its complex form. I have loved to see plot developing and character advancing and the fatalism of passion sweeping actor and actress along to defeat and destruction, such as you see in the great tragedies of Shakespeare.

* * *

The great tragedies of Shakespeare! What do they not recall! To me they conjure up the great names that have added lustre to the stage during the past three decades of years. My first introduction to Shakespeare was through the

tragedy of "Othello," one of the most perfectly constructed, as to its technique, of all Shakespeare's dramas. I was a boy at the time, of some fifteen or sixteen years of age, in attendance at St. Michael's College, Toronto. Our academic school year was ended. We had played under the able direction of Father Ferguson in the open court of the college yard, studded with its whispering pines, Cardinal Wiseman's "Hidden Gem," a drama of the early Christian centuries, and all prizes and accessits had been awarded. We were at last free; though, to be just to the good Basilian Fathers who had and have now charge of St. Michael's College, the spirit of discipline was extremely kind but firm. No more tender-hearted and kindly man ever watched over the welfare of a college of boys than was Father Vincent, the then superior. Blessed be his beautiful memory!

* * *

I remember, as if it were but yesterday, that T. C. King, an English actor of eminence, who had fallen somewhat from dramatic grace through a personal weakness, was occupying the boards just then in the only theater there was in Toronto, situated on King Street. The play for the evening was "Othello," and several of the college boys, the writer included, resolved to take it in. This meant that we could not get

back to our college dormitory that night till nearly midnight. But what of that! Was not the academic year closed, and a plenary indulgence was always the order for that evening. Still, we were apprehensive that the unhallowed hour of our arrival at the college "when churchyards yawn" would be detected. We got in, however, and I have forgotten just now how, but two iron-clad stairways were hard to climb without arousing from slumber the professors in the rooms hard by. We immediately unshod, not exactly because, like Moses in the burning bush, the place where we stood was holy ground, but because our boots on the stairway made an "infernal noise." We crept stealthily to our couches. It was all over.

* * *

Speaking of Shakespeare's tragedies, I have seen but four really great actors interpret them. Now, of course, this excludes many other talented actors whom I cannot classify under the title "great." The names of the four great actors are: Edwin Booth, Barry Sullivan, Salvini and Sir Henry Irving. Each of these four had one great role in which he surpassed all other actors. It is doubtful if Hamlet ever had a truer interpreter than Booth. The same may be said of Sullivan in Richard III, of Salvini in Othello, and Irving in Shylock. All four were

superb—matchless in these individual roles. The finest voice I ever heard on the stage was that of Booth. I hear him yet in reply to Polonius' question: "What do you read, my lord?" run the vocal scale with the reply, "Words, words, words."

* * *

From the moment Barry Sullivan stepped upon the stage uttering the soliloquy:

> "Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by this son of York,"

you thought of nothing but this crafty, plotting, kingly villain, Richard III. At the close of the play the fencing bout on Bosworth field with the Earl of Richmond was so fine a duel, so full of the issue of fate, that it alone was worth the theater admission. I do not think that Sullivan had any other great play, at least I have never heard of one. I should think he would have made a great Iago, though, of course, Richard III and Iago are distinctly two different types of villains. If we compare Richard and Iago, the latter has the more of mind, but is the baser villain. Richard destroys others to raise himself, and destroys them with a speedy death, while on the other hand Iago destroys others, as if, in their destruction alone, he had a sufficient end—he destroys deliberately and carefully and in every way with malice aforethought.

SOME ACTRESSES

THE presence in our city last week of the great English actress, Ellen Terry, recalls to my mind some of the charming women whom I have heard interpret Shakespeare during the past thirty years. Now, after many years, their portraits hang on memory's walls, as if it were but yesterday that they stood before the footlights.

* * *

I have seen so many Ophelias, Lady Macbeths, Portias and Juliets that in some cases their characteristics are somewhat confused. One thing is quite certain and clear in my mind, however, and that is that Adelaide Neilson was the greatest Rosalind of the last half century. Mary Anderson made a very acceptable Rosalind, but to me this beautiful Kentuckian was at her best in such a character as Parthenia in "Ingomar." As to the character of Juliet, she was too large for the Verona heroine, who was fourteen at Lammastide.

* * *

Then, I doubt again if there was enough of the poetry of love in Mary Anderson to represent fully the character of the daughter of the

Capulets. She had far more of that fine poise found in Portia and hardly enough of the bantering abandon for a Rosalind. She made a better Ophelia of the deep and silent heart. I am not indeed surprised that Mary Anderson quit the stage for the quiet retirement of home. She always impressed one as possessing the very virtues that would dower the fireside and a good man's heart with the most perfect gifts of a woman.

* * *

It was not, by the way, in tender and emotional parts that Mary Anderson was greatest, but rather in heroic and sublime parts, for her soul, while it vibrated also with emotion, measured up to its full height only in passages where the strength of true womanhood was enlisted. In her retirement from the stage Mary Anderson added to the home her best and rarest gifts —a soul ennobled with the precious virtues of a true woman.

* * *

In the springtide and early summer of her stage work Julia Marlowe made an admirable Juliet, albeit she has some striking mannerisms, especially in the balcony scene. But Julia Marlowe can flood the stage with love, so that even grey beards sigh and think for the moment that they are young again. She creates for you the atmosphere and the background — you are in Verona under Italian

skies and scale the garden wall with Romeo as he utters the words, "He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

* * *

As for the Lady Macbeths, why, there are so many conceptions of the character that it is difficult to say who has been the greatest Lady Macbeth of the past thirty years. Charlotte Cushman made one of the strongest Lady Macbeths ever seen on the American stage.

* * *

The Hungarian actress Janauschek gave also a very fine presentation of this character, though hardly our accepted Lady Macbeth. Mrs. Bowers represented the physically frail Lady Macbeth with tremendous mental force, energy and will-power, while Janauschek gave you the idea that Lady Macbeth was physically strong and impressive.

* * *

Of course, no one can well ever forget the Portia of Ellen Terry. Portia is my favorite among the women of Shakespeare, though I notice that Ellen Terry has declared in favor of Imogen. But I think Portia is the finest model for every girl who would wish to keep good balance between head and heart, and, in my opinion, it is this beautiful adjustment of head and heart that after all makes for the true and highest type of womanhood.

BEHIND THE READING DESK

TO-DAY I wish to discuss some of the merits of the great public readers or, if you will, elocutionists, whom it has been my privilege to hear during the past thirty years. This is a form of intellectual entertainment which obtains very little in Europe. It has been and indeed is yet very popular in America. In the past great readers, such as were Bellew, Mrs. Siddons, Professor Churchill and Vandenhoff, were always sure of large and appreciative audiences. Such appreciation certainly registers intellectual taste. I fear, however, that the taste for high-class music as a form of entertainment has not yet become fixed in our land, and, while we willingly go to parks and halls to hear great orchestras, we are drawn there not so much by the music as by the desire of relaxation and the novelty of an assembled crowd.

* * *

The first great reader whom it was my privilege to hear was Mrs. Siddons. Those who have heard her will remember that she was a queenly woman, of that fine and delicate mould

which is the delight of painters. She had what might be designated a Mrs. Siddons voice of very fine timbre, musical to an extraordinary degree and capable of the most delicate shading. Her transitions from humor to pathos clearly evidenced how fully her soul was her own and what ready command she had over her every feeling. She could be very dramatic, though I do not think that the dramatic was the highest quality in her reading. Her sleep-walking scene from "Macbeth" was good, as were also Tennyson's "Revenge," but I much preferred her in her selection from "Helen's Babies" and "Father Phil's Collection." Hers was, indeed, a charming personality, and it may be said of her that she queen'd it behind the reading-desk. There have been greater readers than Mrs. Siddons, but few who added to rare gifts such beauty and attractiveness of womanhood.

* * *

Many years ago there passed before New World vision with the brilliancy of a meteor a reader of exceptional refinement and artistic finish—a Mr. Belford, born in Dublin, Ireland, and largely educated at the English universities. Where he received his elocutionary training I know not, but he had a great repertory of readings that touched and included well-nigh everything in the whole range of English literature.

He was an excellent interpreter of Dickens, and could not be surpassed in such a reading as "Boots at Holly Tree Inn." He possessed some of the same subtle vocal witchery as Mrs. Siddons, added to the fact that his was a more comprehensive repertory.

* * *

Those who have heard the late Professor Riddle of Harvard University recognize full well where his strength lay. Professor Riddle was known as an admirable interpreter of the comedies of Shakespeare. In such light pastoral plays as a "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "As You Like It," Professor Riddle had a wonderful power of creating with his voice the very atmosphere of the play and presenting most vividly to your eye each character clearly defined. I have never heard Southey's "How the Waters Come Down at Lodore" read better than by Professor Riddle.

* * *

A great reader, as modest as he is gifted, is Professor Cumnock of Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. His versatility is wonderful. I have heard him in Shakespeare, Dickens, Thackeray, Browning, Tennyson, Longfellow, Burns, the Irish poets of the lighter vein, such as Allingham and Lover, Scotch ballad writers, such as Aytoun, and I regard him as very strong

in all. Professor Cumnock has the veritable soul endowment of a great reader, and can create at will in the hearts of his audience sympathy with the tenderest feelings, the most sublime exaltation, the purest ecstatic joy or deepest sorrow of the soul.

* * *

He is very strong in Scotch readings and his Irish characterization is also very good. I have heard more finished readers than Professor Cumnock, but I have never yet met a vocal interpreter of literature who can, so to speak, reach the heart or mystery in a reading as well as he. Professor Cumnock is not a faddist. He clings to the great masters in prose and verse, and is satisfied to lay bare the soul of great masterpieces which have held and will hold their place for all time. Professor Cumnock is also not only a great reader, but a great teacher as well, and much of his success lies in the fact that he always in all his work inspires and exalts.

NATURE

CONCERNING MOUNTAINS

LET me chat to-day with my readers about God's great altars—the mountains of the world—before which bows the heart of nature full of the homage born of reverence and truth. I have seen something of the Swiss Alps, the French Alps, the Bavarian Alps, but in sublimity and grandeur they do not measure up to the Canadian Rockies. * * *

I shall never forget a summer I once spent in the Canadian Rockies at Banff, where is established the Canadian National Park. This is one of the most delightful spots in the world. Here, as in Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, you get close to nature and live a truly idyllic life. Around you rise in majesty and awe the snow-capped mountains, some to the height of twelve thousand feet. * * *

Unless you have lived among mountains for some time, you will be greatly deceived in the matter of distance. It is like being in a country where the air is very light and rare, as, for instance, in Colorado. I have seen tourists come

to Banff and feel equal to reaching the summit of everything in sight. After a few days, however, they lost their ambition somewhat.

* * *

I remember distinctly a party of three having reached Banff one evening, and registered at Wright's Hotel at the source of the Sulphur Springs, a very good hostelry, where our party was staying, and after a few enquiries they arose next morning at daybreak and, having partaken of a hasty breakfast, started out mountain-climbing.

* * *

They evidently had no idea of the height of a mountain or the distance from its base. The three mountain-climbers returned in the evening hatless, shoeless and I was going to say almost breathless. They had lost their bearings —a very common thing in climbing a mountain—and had wandered at random for hours, rending their garments and pausing to discover if they had reached any definite point in the topography of the mountain.

* * *

Mountains are the sublimest creations that ever came from the hand of God. No man can stand at their base and doubt the existence of God. If he does faith will smite his brow and his heart will immediately utter "Credo!" "I

believe!" And then the feeling that the majesty of God is about you, as eventide sinks down upon each hoary summit, and dwells with you in the valley!

* * *

I had a good taste of mountain climbing once while I was a student at Grenoble University, at the foot of the Alps in France, in the province of Dauphiny. We started out one morning, a party of eighty students, men and women, to climb one of the peaks of the Alps, and our task continued till noonday. When, however, we reached the summit, the view before us repaid well our struggle and toil.

* * *

In the distance could be seen Mount Blanc, of which Coleridge, the English poet, writes, and yet Mount Blanc must have been at least eighty or one hundred miles from us. We all took our luncheons with us and at noontide refreshed and revived ourselves, when we reached the summit of the mountain. Of course wine was the order of the day for drinking. I remember this very well, for owing to a misstep I lost my bottle, which went rolling down the mountain side, causing huge merriment to the party. I believe, however, it was an inferior brand of wine and even now this consoles me.

AS SEEN THROUGH MEMORY

I SIT this evening wrapt in the memory of years agone. The fields, the orchard and the winding lane stretch on and on, and the picture conjures up a boyhood spent where the fragrance of the wild flowers filled the air with an aroma found only where the heart of nature nestles behind the woods and the hills.

* * *

It is a poet's hour. Lazily the cattle linger in the marsh meadow-lands. Twilight has wrapped its mantle around the cold shoulders of day and the voice of the plowman is heard on the hillside, urging on his wearied steeds as they reluctantly traverse the furrow and hope for an early releasement at the gate.

* * *

How small, indeed, is the city when compared with the great temple of the country! It is the English poet Cowper who says "Man made the city, but God made the country." And so indeed it is. These great aisles of God that stretch across the verdant fields, canopied with the splendor of the sky and full of its radiant

mystery, are they not the playground of man—the recreation hall of the human heart, where light and love clasp hands and woo the enchanted hours?

* * *

Yet all this splendor of the fields is but nothing when compared to the splendor of the soul, as it broods on the things of God and transfigures as with a finger of magic the plain illusions of the senses into the deep and pregnant things of the soul. The water at Cana is changed into red, red wine.

* * *

But it is through the prism of memory that glint and glow the ripened rays that stream from those far-off days, when childhood felt the warm clasp of maternal love and the sacred hour of benediction was ushered in in prayer and Peace. As we travel inland the shore and its white sails are soon lost to view.

* * *

Now what shall we carry away from these treasures of memory epics of our morns? Standing upon the white threshold of this goodly temple of our youth, we see rise around us the early dreams and ambitions of our soul. Since then they have been translated into fact. On the one side stands our guardian angel, on the other our mother. They are both filled with anxious care, for their concern is our eternal peace and welfare.

CONTENTS

Dedication 3

Foreword 5

Education 7

Certain Educational Deficiencies..... 9

Catholic and Secular Colleges Contrasted 13

Some European Universities..... 17

Voyaging to Europe and Tipping..... 21

Voyaging to Europe..... 23

On Tipping..... 26

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow..... 31

The Poet Longfellow..... 33

Languages, Magazines and Criticism..... 39

The English Language..... 41

A Word About Languages..... 46

Concerning Composition..... 52

As to Magazines..... 57

Critics and Criticism..... 60

Art 65

Something About Art..... 67

Art and its Times..... 71

Woman: Her Education and Marriage.. 75
Concerning Woman..... 77
Some Marriage Customs..... 81
Government 85
Forms of Government..... 87
Literature 91
Lyric Poetry..... 93
The True Poet..... 96
The Technique of Poetry..... 99
Some Irish Authors..... 103
A Word About Translations..... 106
Snobs, Fads and Customs..... 111
As to Snobs and Snobbery..... 113
As to Fads..... 117
Some Customs..... 120
Some More Customs..... 123
The Stage and the Reading Desk..... 127
Some Memories of Great Actors..... 129
Some Actresses..... 133
Behind the Reading Desk..... 136
Nature 141
Concerning Mountains..... 143
As Seen Through Memory..... 146

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